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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/675,343	09/28/2000	Thomas Vogl	P00,1791	2373

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EXAMINER

GARBOWSKI, LEIGH M

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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2825

DATE MAILED: 10/19/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/675,343

Applicant(s)

VOGL, THOMAS

Examiner

Leigh Marie Garbowski

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 13 July 2004.
2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1,2 and 4-7 is/are pending in the application.
4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
6) ☒ Claim(s) 1,2 and 4-7 is/are rejected.
7) ☒ Claim(s) 2 and 4 is/are objected to.
8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 28 September 2000 is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☒ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6) ☐ Other: _____.

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Applicant's request for reconsideration of the finality of the rejection of the last Office action is persuasive and, therefore, the finality of that action is withdrawn.

Drawings

The drawings are objected to under 37 CFR 1.83(a). The drawings must show every feature of the invention specified in the claims. Therefore, the method including all of the features recited must be shown or the feature(s) canceled from the claim(s). No new matter should be entered.

Corrected drawing sheets are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. Any amended replacement drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. The figure or figure number of an amended drawing should not be labeled as "amended." If a drawing figure is to be canceled, the appropriate figure must be removed from the replacement sheet, and where necessary, the remaining figures must be renumbered and appropriate changes made to the brief description of the several views of the drawings for consistency. Additional replacement sheets may be necessary to show the renumbering of the remaining figures. The replacement sheet(s) should be labeled "Replacement Sheet" in the page header (as per 37 CFR 1.84(c)) so as not to obstruct any portion of the drawing figures. If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Claim Objections

Claims 2 and 4 are objected to because of the following informalities: as per claim 2, the language "can be" [line 2] should be changed to recite a positive limitation, not an intended use; and as per claim 4, "critical region" [line 1] should be plural] and it is not clear how the claim ends because the end of the claim is cut off [see applicant's page 2]. Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 1-7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claim 1 provides for the use of "using the measure of a program procedure" [line 6], but, since the claim does not set forth any steps involved in the method/process, it is unclear what method/process applicant is intending to encompass. A claim is indefinite where it merely recites a use without any active, positive steps delimiting how this use is actually practiced.

Claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the claimed recitation of a use, without setting forth any steps involved in the process, results in an improper definition of a process, i.e., results in a claim which is not a proper process claim under 35 U.S.C. 101. See for example *Ex parte Dunki*, 153 USPQ 678 (Bd.App. 1967) and *Clinical Products, Ltd. v. Brenner*, 255 F. Supp. 131, 149 USPQ 475 (D.D.C. 1966).

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Claim 1 recites the limitation "the coating to be etched off" in lines 9-10. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim. The relation of the coating to the layout, configuration elements, and critical regions is not clear, thus, understanding how the determining of the critical regions is defined by height and spacing is vague and indefinite.

The remaining claims, though not specifically mentioned, are rejected for incorporating the errors of their respective base claims by dependency.

The following rejection is based on the examiner's best interpretation of the claims in view of the issues raised above.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

Claims 1-2, 4-7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Ohnuma [U.S. Patent #6,370,441 B1].

As per claim 1, Ohnuma disclose a method comprising: accessing the data structure of a layout [column 16, lines 32-33]; accessing the data structure of the configuration elements arranged in a plane of the layout [column 16, lines 32-34]; and using the measures of a program procedure [column 1, line 28], determining the critical regions between the configuration elements [column 16, lines 33-37], modifying the critical regions [column 16, lines 37-39] and visually displaying the modified critical regions [column 16, lines 53-56], wherein the determining of the critical regions is defined by height and spacing of the coating

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to be etched off [column 1, line 48-column 2, line 10]. As per claim 2, wherein the modifying of the critical regions is undertaken so that no under-etching is formed, said modified critical regions being integrated into the existing data structure of the layout [column 1, line 48-column 2, line 10; column 16, lines 41-60]. As per claim 4, wherein the critical regions are adjustable by an admissible, fabrication-oriented, minimal spacing [column 1, lines 11-17]. As per claim 5, wherein the critical regions between the configuration elements are filled out by polygons so that the critical regions between the configuration elements are avoided [column 1, lines 41-47]. As per claim 6, wherein the polygons of the critical regions are limited given possible superimpositions of the configuration elements [column 14, lines 10-26]. As per claim 7, wherein the polygons of the critical regions are enlarged slightly so that the edges of the polygons superimpose with the edges of the configuration elements [column 14, lines 10-26].

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments with respect to the claims have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection. However, the applicant is reminded that the recitation of "recognizing and rectifying etch-critical regions" has not been given patentable weight because the recitation occurs in the preamble. A preamble is generally not accorded any patentable weight where it merely recites the purpose of a process or the intended use of a structure, and where the body of the claim does not depend on the preamble for completeness but, instead, the process steps or structural limitations are able to stand alone.

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See *In re Hirao*, 535 F.2d 67, 190 USPQ 15 (CCPA 1976) and *Kropa v. Robie*, 187 F.2d 150, 152, 88 USPQ 478, 481 (CCPA 1951).

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. The above rejection was given as exemplary of the following art anticipating the broadly and confusingly claimed subject matter. Yamamoto et al. [U.S. Patent #6,077,310] disclose determining, modifying and visually displaying critical regions, wherein etching effects are taken into consideration by representation as polygons. Capodieci [U.S. Patent #6,044,007] discloses modifying mask layout data by taking into account the etch process. Lavin et al. [U.S. Patents #5,671,152 and #5,923,563] disclose filling out by polygons the critical regions between configuration elements to avoid under-etching, including a visual display.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from examiner Andrea Liu should be directed to Leigh Marie Garbowski whose telephone number is 571-272-1893. The examiner can normally be reached on days.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Matthew Smith can be reached on 571-272-1907. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



LEIGH M. GARBOWSKI
PRIMARY EXAMINER